



## CONTEMPORARY ART: CULTIVATING FENG ZIKAI'S TEACHINGS



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**Abstract:** In response to the current lack of innovative and aesthetic abilities in art, this article deeply explored Feng Zikai's art thought and its contemporary value. As a great artist with multiple identities, Feng Zikai's artistic ideas are not only a valuable asset in the field of art, but also of great significance in promoting the development of contemporary art. This article elaborated on Feng Zikai's art thoughts, principles and education theories, and on the contemporary value of his art thoughts, from four perspectives: humanistic care, cultural innovation, service level and social harmony. Through research, it has been found that Feng Zikai's art thoughts are deeply humanistic, compatible and sustainable, with the ancient as the new and improving service levels, with the people as the foundation. Qu Gao's and the masses' thoughts play an important role in shaping children's personality and character, enhancing aesthetic and cultural innovation abilities, and also have certain guiding significance for today's socialism. This article hoped to provide more reliable experience and theoretical basis for the cultivation and development of art through the study of Feng Zikai's art thoughts and the times' value.


**Keywords:** Art Thought. Era Value. Feng Zikai's Thought. Art Education.

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**Resumo:** Em resposta à atual falta de habilidades inovadoras e estéticas na arte, este artigo explorou profundamente o pensamento artístico de Feng Zikai e seu valor contemporâneo. Como um grande artista com várias identidades, as ideias artísticas de Feng Zikai não são apenas um recurso valioso, no campo da arte, mas também são de grande importância para promover o desenvolvimento da arte contemporânea. Este texto abordou os pensamentos artísticos, os princípios e as teorias educacionais de Feng Zikai, e analisou o valor contemporâneo de seus pensamentos artísticos, sob quatro perspectivas: cuidado humanístico, inovação cultural, nível de serviço e harmonia social. Por meio de pesquisas, descobriu-se que os pensamentos artísticos de Feng Zikai são profundamente humanistas, compatíveis e sustentáveis, tanto com o antigo como com o novo, e melhoram os níveis de serviço, tendo as pessoas como base. Os pensamentos de Qu Gao e das massas desempenham um papel importante na formação da personalidade e do caráter das crianças, aprimorando as habilidades de inovação estética e cultural, e também têm certo significado orientador para o socialismo atual. Espera-se, com este artigo, fornecer uma experiência mais confiável e uma base teórica para o cultivo e o desenvolvimento da arte, através do estudo dos pensamentos artísticos de Feng Zikai e do valor da época.

**Palavras-chave:** Pensamento artístico. Valor da Era. Pensamento de Feng Zikai. Educação artística.

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# CONTEMPORARY ART: CULTIVATING FENG ZIKAI'S TEACHINGS<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** In response to the current lack of innovative and aesthetic abilities in art, this article deeply explored Feng Zikai's art thought and its contemporary value. As a great artist with multiple identities, Feng Zikai's artistic ideas are not only a valuable asset in the field of art, but also of great significance in promoting the development of contemporary art. This article elaborated on Feng Zikai's art thoughts, principles and education theories, and on the contemporary value of his art thoughts, from four perspectives: humanistic care, cultural innovation, service level and social harmony. Through research, it has been found that Feng Zikai's art thoughts are deeply humanistic, compatible and sustainable, with the ancient as the new and improving service levels, with the people as the foundation. Qu Gao's and the masses' thoughts play an important role in shaping children's personality and character, enhancing aesthetic and cultural innovation abilities, and also have certain guiding significance for today's socialism. This article hoped to provide more reliable experience and theoretical basis for the cultivation and development of art through the study of Feng Zikai's art thoughts and the times' value.

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## INTRODUCTION

Feng Zikai was born during the late Qing and Republic of China periods, and his life journey can be described as the process of Chinese art education from prosperity to decline (Jiang, 2019, p. 35). When people mention Feng Zikai, they will think of his manga works. His manga works have simple and smooth lines, unique style, and reflect the life's taste. His representative work is "After a person is scattered, a hook on the crescent moon is like water in the sky". For his artistic ideas, people's focus is mostly on Feng Zikai's children's art education (Sun, 2012, p. 166) and his aesthetic education ideas (Liu, 2015, p. 94). In fact, Mr. Feng Zikai's artistic ideas also have the times' research value. Feng Zikai's artistic

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ideas are mainly reflected in artistic principles, such as “putting the heart first, following the technique”, “unity of technique and beauty”, and “isolated artistic perspective”.

These ideas were based on China’s actual situation at that time, and were an innovation and transformation of traditional culture. They retained a deep humanistic concern and kept pace with the times, greatly promoting the development of artistic ideas at that time. Feng Zikai’s achievements in art thought and education not only helped art reach the common people, but also contributed to the development of Chinese art education and had a profound impact on today. His educational philosophy and practical behavior are worthy of people’s consideration and reference today.

As an outstanding modern Chinese artist, Feng Zikai’s thoughts have attracted many scholars’ discussions. They have studied Feng Zikai’s thoughts from different perspectives and summarized their formation process. Feng Zikai’s religious ideas, cultural practices, overseas interaction behavior, as well as his religious ideas and cultural practices in his letters from the 1950s to the 1970s, are regarded as a set of values or an emotional structure. A social understanding has been recorded, helping Feng Zikai explore his own path of ideological communication (Zeng, 2022, p. 443). Feng Zikai fairly maintained the uniqueness of Chinese painting techniques and the superiority of ideas, and proposed the theory of Chinese art superiority. His comparison of Chinese and Western paintings is not only a continuation of traditional Chinese painting theory, but also an inclusive approach to Western painting theory (Zhan, 2019, p. 65).

Feng Zikai’s artistic realism emphasizes that on the one hand, he should learn from realism painting in terms of themes and techniques, and pay attention to objectively reflecting the ordinary people’s lives. On the other hand, by absorbing Chinese painting from its conception and brushstrokes, the strong and meaningful impression is emphasized, striving to achieve an artistic style that reflects individuality and integrates Chinese and Western artistic traditions (Pan, 2018, p. 30). Feng Zikai accepted the influence of rich traditional ideas and, through his own understanding, made choices, blends and integrations, ultimately forming his unique “childlike innocence” ideology (Liu, 2020, p. 14). These scholars’ research on the formation process of Feng Zikai’s thought can enrich its ideological connotation. However, due to the lack of exploration of Feng Zikai’s ideological value in his research, it is not comprehensive and has limitations.

However, with the times’ development, the analysis of Feng Zikai’s ideological value has attracted more scholars’ attention. They analyzed Feng Zikai’s aesthetic thoughts and his aesthetic education philosophy, and elaborated on the practical role of his thoughts. Feng Zikai’s early aesthetic education ideas and artistic propositions had a positive effect and significant impact on the founding reasons, educational characteristics and social contributions of Zhenhua Girls’ School (Chu, 2020, p. 21).

Feng Zikai has achieved outstanding achievements in the fields of literature and art, making tremendous contributions to the development of modern art and education. His aesthetic education ideas and practical activities still have strong vitality today, and are of great significance for the development of aesthetic education in modern schools and society (Zhao; Zhu, 2022, p. 27). Scholars' research on the value of Feng Zikai's ideology helps to improve his overall ideological theory and better unleash its practical value. However, due to the lack of emphasis on exploring its aesthetic ideas in its research, it is difficult to apply it well and provide a good reference. From the scholars' research, it can be seen that the research on Feng Zikai's thoughts is extremely rich. However, there is a scarcity of specialized research on Feng Zikai's art thoughts and values, which means that there is currently a lack of research on Feng Zikai's art thoughts and value theory, and more research is needed to enrich it.

This article conducted a study on Feng Zikai's art thoughts and the times' value, elaborating on his artistic views, principles of art thought and educational concepts. In addition, this article also elaborated on the contemporary value of Feng Zikai's art thoughts from four aspects. Through analysis, it was found that Feng Zikai's art ideology not only helps to provide more practical and effective experience for art education, but also helps to play its leading role in art, playing an important role in achieving the unity of knowledge and action in art.

The main contributions of this article are as follows: by studying Feng Zikai's artistic ideas, we can evaluate the contemporary value of his art, which helps to understand his inherit artistic creation spirit and inspires contemporary artists to learn from and develop in the creative process. At the same time, studying his artistic ideas can deeply explore the response and impact of Feng Zikai's art on social change, and explore his guiding significance for the development of contemporary art. Studying his artistic concepts and principles can showcase his unique insights and innovative thinking on art forms, such as painting, calligraphy, illustration, etc. This is beneficial for the development of traditional art forms and the expansion of creative techniques, which has enlightening significance. Overall, studying Feng Zikai's art thoughts can enrich China's art education ideas, promote the development of the art industry and have important enlightening effects on today's aesthetic ideals and artistic practices. It also helps people better understand the life's meaning and provides us with a unique artistic perspective and aesthetic experience.

## **1 OVERVIEW OF FENG ZIKAI**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION TO FENG ZIKAI'S LIFE**

Feng Zikai (1898-1975), a native of Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, is an art master who combines various art forms, such as literati, painter, art educator, architectural historian,

art theorist, calligrapher, translator, etc. His achievements and contributions in art are multifaceted (Zhang, 2018, p. 167). His rich works are rare in modern China's literary and artistic circles, leaving behind rich cultural heritage and attracting many scholars' attention.

He has his own unique insights into children's art education. He believes that, in children's art education, it should be based on children's nature and individual differences, and use children's interests and standard life as educational materials (Xiang, 2008, p. 86). According to the actual situation, children's art learning is designed. He pays attention to the children's natural nature through artistic vision and calligraphy, showcasing a lively, innocent and energetic world for children. His concept still has important implications for today's preschool art education.

He also has his own unique ideas in the field of music education, and he believes that music is also a part of art education (Lin, 2003). Although Feng Zikai's reputation in music education is not as good as his achievements in art, his philosophy in music education can provide some reference for the update and reform of current music education concepts. He believes that music has a good educational effect and high social value. He emphasizes the ontological nature of music, advocates the integration of music into people's lives and emphasizes the promotion of social music education.

## 1.2 FORMATION OF FENG ZIKAI'S ARTISTIC VIEW

The formation of Feng Zikai's artistic view is mainly influenced by two factors: one is his life experience and philosophy, and the other is his artistic practice and exploration. Firstly, Feng Zikai's life experience and philosophy had a profound impact on his artistic views. He was born into a traditional Chinese family and has received traditional Chinese cultural education since childhood, with a deep understanding and love for traditional Chinese culture. At the same time, he has also experienced the modern society's changes and impacts, and has a profound understanding and reflection on the real society. Therefore, his artistic views not only reflect the gentleness and humility of traditional Chinese culture, but also reflect the modern society's reality and freedom. Secondly, Feng Zikai's artistic practice and exploration also had a significant impact on his artistic views. In his early years, he studied violin and piano at the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music and founded the "Complete Collection of Feng Zikai's Comics" during the Anti-Japanese War. In his long-term creative practice, he continuously explores and innovates, combining traditional Chinese culture with modern art, and forming his own unique artistic style. His works are known for their concise, lively, humorous and lively depictions, showcasing the human relationships and natural scenery in real life.

In the field of art, Feng Zikai is most respected for his comics and essays. His comics are known for their concise lines, vivid images and profound meanings, expressing his unique insights into life and human nature. His prose is mainly characterized by an approachable and humorous language style, depicting his feelings and reflections on life and nature. Overall, Feng Zikai's artistic views were gradually formed through his life experiences and artistic practices. It not only reflects the elegance and humility of traditional Chinese culture, but also reflects the modern society's reality and freedom. His manga and prose works are the most highly regarded, renowned for their concise, lively, humorous and lively depictions, showcasing his unique insights into life and human nature.

### 1.3 COMPARISON BETWEEN FENG ZIKAI'S THOUGHT AND WANG CHAOWEN'S ONE

Feng Zikai and Wang Chaowen are both important figures in modern and contemporary Chinese aesthetics and art theory. Their ideas and theories share similarities in many aspects, but there are also some differences. Both Feng Zikai and Wang Chaowen believe that aesthetic experience is the core of artistic creation and appreciation, emphasizing a deep understanding and experience of the emotions and meanings expressed in artistic works. Although their realism perspectives differ, both Feng Zikai and Wang Chaowen advocate art creation based on reality, believing that art should reflect real life and the people's voices. They all believe that art has important social functions, which can convey social values, promote national spirit and even promote social progress. The differences in their thinking mainly lie in the differences in artistic concepts, research fields and attitudes towards traditional culture. Feng Zikai pays more attention to the independence and aesthetic value of art, emphasizing the freedom and individual expression of artistic creation. Wang Chaowen emphasized the social function and ideological attributes of art, believing that art should serve politics and society (Sun, 2015, p. 5). Feng Zikai mainly dabbled in fields, such as painting, literature and art education, while Wang Chaowen focused more on aesthetic theory, art criticism and Marxist aesthetics. Feng Zikai highly values traditional culture and believes that it is the foundation of artistic creation. Wang Chaowen, on the other hand, paid more attention to the development of modern culture and held a critical attitude towards traditional culture, advocating for inheriting and developing it through criticism.

In summary, Feng Zikai and Wang Chaowen have similarities in aesthetic thinking and artistic theory, but there are also some differences. Their ideas and theories have made important contributions to the development of modern and contemporary Chinese aesthetics and art theory, and have important guiding significance for us to understand and appreciate art works, and improve aesthetic literacy.

Overall, compared to thinkers of the same period, Feng Zikai's ideas have similarities but also differences. The similarity lies in that Feng Zikai and other thinkers believe that

art is closely related to life, emphasizing that art originates from life and is higher than it. They all believe that art can reflect social reality and people's voices, and has profound social significance and value. Meanwhile, Feng Zikai and other thinkers praised the nature's beauty and believed that nature was the source of human artistic creation. They all emphasize that art should pursue the nature's beauty, promote a simple and concise artistic style, and guide people to return to and get close to nature.

In addition, they all pay attention to children's art education. Feng Zikai and other thinkers believe that children's art education has important value and should be valued and promoted. He believes that children's art education can cultivate their imagination and creativity, and promote their comprehensive development. But there are also certain differences. Firstly, there are differences in artistic concepts. Feng Zikai emphasized the connection between art and life and the nature's beauty, while other thinkers may pay more attention to the form and techniques of art, or pay more attention to the social functions of it. Secondly, there are differences in cultural backgrounds. Feng Zikai is a modern Chinese painter, essayist and art educator, while other thinkers have different cultural backgrounds and experiences. Then, there are differences in research fields. Feng Zikai's main research areas are comics, prose, translated works, etc., while other thinkers may pay more attention to other fields, such as philosophy, psychology, sociology, etc. Overall, although there are some differences between Feng Zikai and other thinkers, they all have similar views on the connection between art and life, the nature's beauty and children's art education. Their ideas have had a profound impact on the development of modern Chinese culture and art.

## **2 FENG ZIKAI'S ART THOUGHT**

### **2.1 FENG ZIKAI'S VIEW ON ART**

Feng Zikai's art thoughts are closely related to aesthetic education (Xiao; Zhao, 2021). He advocates for aesthetic education, which cultivates people's virtue and perfect personality through art education. It allows people to view life with an artistic perspective, improve the life's taste and promote social harmony. Among them, the concept of art is an important component of his art thoughts. Taking the heart as the foundation and relying on skills as a supplement are an important principle of Feng Zikai's art thought, and cultivating artistic heart is the central link of Feng Zikai's art thought. The life's art is the ultimate destination of Feng Zikai's art. Feng Zikai's artistic concept is the theoretical basis for the formation of his art thoughts. Analyzing the connotation and function of his art thoughts can help to explore the value of Feng Zikai's art thoughts at a deeper level.

- (1) Art is the mutual unity of technology and beauty

Feng Zikai believes that art should have both rich content and clever forms, achieving the unity of technology and beauty. This requires that, in art creation, artists not only use exquisite techniques to showcase their clever forms, but also cultivate their character and express rich content with an open-minded mind. Feng Zikai also proposed the relationship between technology and morality, and pointed out that technology and morality are dialectically unified in art creation. On this basis, *The Analects of Confucius* provides a thorough explanation of the concept of “after drawing” (Zhang; Lu, 2018, p. 28). Feng Zikai applied the theory of “after drawing” to oil painting creation, emphasizing the need to first use a white background, as the background, and, then, outline the lines. He believes that Western painting pays attention to the real background. All the pictures need to be painted, pursuing the similarity with the entity, and emphasizing realism. However, Chinese painting mostly overlooks the background and directly displays the things in the picture in the air. A stone and an orchid are all suspended in the air, with no other decorations around them, only a blank space. This type of freehand brushwork can give people spiritual stimulation (Liu, 2010, p. 15). Western paintings are close to the reality, not like paintings; while Chinese paintings do not need a background, leaving blanks for the viewer to fill in the answers, in a more artistic way. This is also why using “post elements” can make the reply full of poetry. He believes that true art requires technology, beauty and virtue, which is a valuable form of art.

Feng Zikai’s art ideology is a dialectical relationship between skill and morality, pointing out that art requires both goodness and cleverness. Good but not clever, even with education and enlightenment, it is difficult to become art without beautiful forms. Clever but not good, one can only rely on beautiful shapes to briefly please the viewer, but cannot provide good inspiration and education, which is only a technical product. Based on this, Feng Zikai proposed the concept of art education that is centered on the heart and supplemented by skills, and emphasized the cultivation of the mind and the moral cultivation of the educated in art teaching.

## (2) Insulation art vision

In real life, people always observe things in accordance with the life’s usual rules and habits, and pursue their actual value. Feng Zikai states that art is the only way to obtain the true state of things (Yan, 2019, p. 535). He also emphasizes the true nature of things, which is the reflection of things in people’s hearts, and the power and meaning that things give people. That is to say, science can only provide people with relationships or causes related to things, and cannot provide people with simple truth. To explore the true truth of things in the universe, one can only achieve it through art. Art can abandon the relationship between things and the past and future, and pursue the inner feelings of the current state of things. At this time, things have nothing to do with the world, they are in a state of isolation. People can feel satisfaction with things while being in them, which is the enjoyment of beauty. From this



point, it can be seen that Feng Zikai believes that the world's truth can be discovered through art, which is due to the artistic perspective, namely insulation.

Feng Zikai's insulated artistic perspective in his artistic concept is to observe things in a state of isolation and seek their true colors (Andrš, 2021, p. 61). Insulated perspective is an important theoretical concept in Feng Zikai's thought, guiding people to view things with an insulated attitude when creating and feeling art, thus obtaining a pure aesthetic feeling.

## 2.2 PRINCIPLES OF FENG ZIKAI'S ART THOUGHT

Feng Zikai always adheres to the art principle of taking heart as the foundation and technique as the subordinate, which means that when conducting art education, we should emphasize the experience and feeling of beauty, the indirect influence on art learning and the cultivation of a heart that loves beauty, rather than focusing on the pursuit of direct effects (Hektor, 2019, p. 535). Direct effects refer to the emphasis on methods, techniques and practicality in art teaching. The indirect effect is to improve the level of art appreciation in the process of learning art. Influenced by beauty, the insulated attitude in aesthetic perception is applied to real life, making life more interesting and beautiful. Feng Zikai believes that the fine arts, set up by various colleges, often view art as a subsidiary of science and only value the practical results of art courses. For example, in the field of painting, schools choose practical painting materials, such as natural specimens or sports equipment. When teaching art, teachers should pay attention to the art works completed by students after class. Feng Zikai believes that such art thoughts have lost the original meaning of art. He believes that studying art is not to cultivate painters, but to comprehend, experience and appreciate beauty in art, so that life is filled with love and beauty, and life is filled with an artistic atmosphere (Geremie, 1989).

Feng Zikai's art principle of using heart as the foundation and technique as the subordinate emerged from the art idea of combining virtue and technique. He affirmed the role of the heart in art and did not deny the importance of technique. In art, he provides guidance to beginners from three aspects.

Firstly, in learning art, one should attach importance to the cultivation of sensation. Feng Zikai stated that art relies on emotions to express one's soul (Hektor, 2019, p. 535). Therefore, for those who are studying art, the first step is to cultivate their sensibility, making them more sensitive and able to better absorb art. In his view, subjects, such as English and mathematics, emphasize intelligence, while art emphasizes sensibility and aesthetic perception, which is achieved through an "insulated" state. The exercise of the senses requires cleaning the eyes and ears, which is a state of transcendence, abandoning external objects, and only focusing on the sound and color of things. For example, in sketching, it is necessary

to use a clear eye to capture the characteristics and colors of things. In the study and research of art, one should always maintain a pure heart, view things in the world with a peaceful attitude and a fair and objective attitude.

Secondly, the beauty of soundness must be learned. Feng Zikai divided the center of art into two types. One is the beauty of soundness, that is, the combination of goodness and cleverness, which is the unity of content and form. One is the unsound beauty, which is a vulgar beauty, such as pleasing the public in a seductive and intense way. It can create a visual pleasure, immerse oneself in it and lose oneself. Another type is pathological beauty, which can confuse people, make them unable to extricate themselves and lose their sanity. Feng Zikai advocated that students should be cautious in aesthetics and accept the beauty of soundness in aesthetics. Only the beauty of soundness can breed a sense of beauty to give people insights into life. Unhealthy beauty misleads people's emotions and leads them towards the wrong path.

Then, it is necessary to attach importance to technical training. Feng Zikai pointed out that, in art learning and creation, it is necessary to have a good learning attitude. Art is not something that can be played with casually. It should be viewed with a solemn and rigorous attitude, and should not be created and studied with a cynical and utilitarian mindset. At the same time, he also emphasized that art learners and creators should have a resilient and diligent heart, and practice more.

Feng Zikai's art principle, which is heart-centeredness and skill-subordination clearly, points out that, in the process of art learning, the most important purpose is to cultivate a heart that can feel emotion and beauty, and to emphasize the cultivation of feelings, so that a person can gain a sense of beauty and pleasure. The mind and technique have dialectical unity. Only by observing things with a pure mindset and treating one's own works with a correct mindset, the works he creates can be called technical art. The artistic principle of "mind and technique come first" still has guiding and enlightening significance for the current teaching of art disciplines.

### **2.3 FENG ZIKAI'S ART EDUCATION THEORY**

Feng Zikai is adept at using poetic brushstrokes to describe every detail in children's lives, as well as his perception of the beautiful things around him. These are inseparable from Feng Zikai's own growth experience. In Feng Zikai's manga works, the children's image and the student's one are the two main characters in his manga (Li, 2019, p. 99). In Feng Zikai's comics, most of them are about children's school and family education. He advocated creating a tolerant and harmonious educational environment for children, whether in family or school

education, so that they can act according to their own nature, create an environment that can stimulate their imagination and creativity, and enable them to grow and develop healthily.

Feng Zikai has rich practical teaching experience in art education. Based on his understanding of children and art, he proposed emphasizing interest and neglecting realism, and children's paintings should reflect educational concepts, such as life. He hoped to rely on daily life or artistic tools and means to cultivate children's innovative spirit, maintain their creativity, and protect and promote their personality, achieving unity and harmony in their personality. He used the standard of "art is related to life" to judge the quality of children's paintings, that is to say, children's paintings must reflect their lives. Any painting that is based on children's life emotions, which comes from children's hands and has an artistic form, is an excellent children's painting.

Feng Zikai believes that the goal of children's art education should be to cultivate their aesthetic ability and creativity, helping them better understand and appreciate the beauty in life. He said, "Art education is not to cultivate artists, but to cultivate people who can appreciate and understand art." Therefore, he emphasized the use of art education to improve children's aesthetic literacy, and cultivate their innovative thinking and imagination. He believes that the content of children's art education should include multiple fields, such as painting, music, literature, etc. He advocates using nature as a teacher and encourages children to observe and depict things in life. In addition, he also believes that children should be exposed to various art forms, such as sculpture, drama, etc., in order to cultivate their artistic interests and hobbies.

In terms of painting, Feng Zikai advocates realism and believes that children should learn to depict their own feelings and observe nature. He said, "Children's painting is not to make them look like, but to express their feelings." At the same time, he also emphasized that children should learn basic painting skills, such as sketching and color, to help them better express their ideas.

In terms of music, Feng Zikai advocates for children to learn piano, violin and other instruments to cultivate their musical literacy and appreciation ability. He believes that music can stimulate children's creativity and imagination, helping them better understand art.

In terms of literature, Feng Zikai advocates reading classic literary works, such as "Dream of the Red Chamber" and "Journey to the West", to cultivate children's literary literacy and aesthetic ability. He said, "Literary works can not only improve children's literary literacy, but also help them better understand life and society."

Feng Zikai believes that children's art education should adopt heuristic teaching methods, which stimulate children's creativity and imagination through guidance and inspiration. He said, "Art education is not about teaching students how to draw, but about

teaching them how to observe and think.” Therefore, he advocates emphasizing the cultivation of children’s observation and thinking abilities in teaching, allowing them to create unique artistic works through their own observation and thinking. In addition, Feng Zikai also emphasized the importance of practice. He believes that, only in practice, one can truly master artistic skills and knowledge. Therefore, he advocates emphasizing practical aspects in teaching, allowing children to continuously improve their artistic level through practice. Feng Zikai believes that the environment for children’s art education should be relaxed, free and full of creativity. He said, “Art education should be carried out in a relaxed environment, allowing students to freely play and create.” He advocates creating a relaxed and free environment in teaching, allowing children to freely express their thoughts and feelings.

At the same time, Feng Zikai also emphasized the importance of family and society for children’s art education. He believes that families and society should provide children with a good art education environment, allowing them to be exposed to various art forms and cultural works in their daily lives.

Feng Zikai’s artistic ideas and concepts are of great significance for the current preschool art education. Firstly, Feng Zikai emphasized the connection between art and life, believing that art should reflect real life and the people’s voices. This viewpoint has important guiding significance for the current preschool art education. In preschool art education, we should focus on guiding young children to observe and experience things in life, cultivate their perception and understanding of real life, and help them better understand and express their emotions and thoughts. Secondly, Feng Zikai advocates the nature’s beauty and believes that nature is the source of human artistic creation. The inspiration for preschool art education, from this perspective, is that we should guide young children to be exposed to and observe nature, allowing them to discover the nature’s beauty and charm through observation and experience, thereby cultivating their aesthetic ability and creativity. Once again, Feng Zikai emphasizes the children’s childlike innocence and interest, believing that children have an innate sensitivity and love for music, and have different understanding and experience of music, compared to the adults’ ones. The inspiration for preschool art education, from this perspective, is that we should respect children’s personalities and interests, choose art materials and methods that are suitable for children, encourage them to freely create and perform music, and thus cultivate their musical literacy and aesthetic ability. Finally, Feng Zikai advocates that art education should respect children’s individual characteristics and choose art materials and methods that are suitable for them too. This viewpoint has important guiding significance for the current preschool art education.

In preschool art education, we should focus on understanding each child’s personal characteristics and interests. Suitable artistic materials and methods can be selected based on their characteristics to stimulate their creativity and imagination.

### 3 ERA VALUE OF FENG ZIKAI'S ART THOUGHT

Feng Zikai's art thoughts can promote the better development of people's personalities. With his profound humanistic care, as the starting point, he pays much attention to the suffering of people's livelihoods, social progress and other aspects. His art thoughts have their unique value and contemporary one. Feng Zikai's art thoughts have important theoretical and practical value for the construction of today's aesthetic ideology and harmonious society.

#### 3.1 DEEP HUMANISTIC CARE

The first is Feng Zikai's love and closeness towards his children. He observes that the children's world is completely different from the adults' one, believing that children are the most healthy and able to see the truth of things with the clearest and most complete understanding. He passionately praised the children's pure and flawless spirit and consistent attitude, believing that they all have a strong sense of manhood, while adults are often hypocritical and cowardly. Secondly, Feng Zikai's comic works often depict the details of people's lives, demonstrating his deep concern for life. His prose works often depict life scenes, portray character images, and express his unique understanding and insights into life. Then, Feng Zikai's art works are full of love and admiration for life. His comic works depict various forms of life, from the children's innocence to the adults' complexity and diversity. His prose works often express awe and gratitude for life, as well as unique insights and understanding of life. In addition, Feng Zikai often explores human nature's various aspects in his art works. His comic works often depict the characters' inner world and reveal the human nature's complexity and diversity. His prose works often depict the characters' individual characteristics and express their complex and diverse understanding and insights into human nature. Finally, Feng Zikai's art works often contain profound humanistic care. His comic works depict the charm and artistic conception of life through simple and smooth lines and unique style. His prose works often express his love for life and concern for human nature through descriptions of life and exploration of human nature.

Overall, Feng Zikai's profound humanistic care, in his art thoughts, is mainly reflected in his praise for childlike innocence, concern for life, praise for life, exploration of human nature and artistic conception of humanistic care.

Feng Zikai exhibits a calm, gentle and subtle artistic temperament in both his prose and his art (Wang, 2018, p. 77). In the 1920s and 1930s, art tended to be politicized and, in the fierce debate over the relationship between life and art, Feng Zikai became an isolated bystander. Whether it is the Baima Lake of the Little Willow House, the former residence of Yuanyuan Hall, or the residence of another residence on the West Lake, he has always fought for socialism in his own way. Through his own artistic creation, he has given high attention

to the ordinary people's lives and social phenomena. He expressed his deepest and most sincere concern for life through a calm and indifferent literary creation style. As a writer and artist, Feng Zikai can experience his subtle pain and sincere patriotism when facing national crises. Faced with various ugly phenomena in the world and the enemies' wanton invasion, Feng Zikai hopes to use art education and a populist and popular art work to change people's hypocritical and anxious living conditions to improve their spiritual world and stimulate their love and patriotism, enhancing their cohesion, and ultimately achieving national prosperity. His concept could inspire people's patriotism, awaken their patriotic consciousness and make them fight for socialism, which had important value at that time.

Feng Zikai's art ideology highlights the autonomy of aesthetic education, pays attention to human development and values the comprehensive cultivation of personality, enriching the content of modern Chinese art education, which has its unique academic value and practical significance. At the same time, he also inherited the different students' attention to art, taking improving the national spirit as his own responsibility, emphasizing the importance of art education and the formation of people's personalities. He advocated cultivating his artistic spirit through the return of childlike innocence, thereby reshaping the people's personality. His art education ideas and artistic concepts have important value for the formation of children's personality and character shaping today.

### **3.2 PROMOTING CULTURAL INNOVATION, COMPATIBILITY AND CONTINUATION, AND TAKING THE PAST AS THE NEW**

Feng Zikai believes that art should integrate tradition and modernity, inheriting and promoting traditional culture, as well as absorbing and borrowing the essence of modern culture. He advocates combining traditional cultural elements with modern art forms to create unique and charming works of art. He actively explores and innovates in artistic forms, attempting to integrate different artistic forms and styles together to create a unique artistic style. His comic works have concise and smooth lines, unique style, and distinct personality and innovation. He also believes that the key to cultural innovation lies in exploring cultural values. He focuses on exploring cultural values with contemporary significance from traditional culture and real life, and integrating them into his own artistic works to achieve cultural inheritance and innovation. Feng Zikai advocates innovation on the basis of inheriting traditional culture, believing that it should be compatible and sustainable, taking the past as the new, and combining elements of traditional culture with modern art forms to create unique and charming works of art. His comic works often take the past as the new, combining traditional cultural elements with modern life to present unique art. These ideas are of great significance for promoting cultural innovation and promoting the inheritance and development of traditional culture.

Looking at Feng Zikai's most well-known comic works, it can be seen that he has profound attainments in traditional Chinese culture and art, as well as a profound understanding of them. His manga is simple and clear, full of truth in the ordinary, and finds profound meaning in the subtle. His paintings are concise and beautiful, reflecting the author's aloof and lofty personality. These are all unique to traditional Chinese culture. Feng Zikai is a cultivator who integrates his own understanding of traditional Chinese philosophical Buddhist ideas into his works, making them elegant and refined, with profound philosophical principles, and also imbued with a touch of compassion. His paintings are based on traditional Chinese painting tools and techniques, utilizing the composition of Western paintings and making good use of ancient poetry and new paintings. The screen is concise and sincere, filled with a strong sense of ink and style (Zhan, 2018, p. 73). People can see that Feng Zikai's art creation is a reflection of traditional Chinese culture and art, and his works have an aesthetic style and internal charm, rather than external forms and laws. His art works are not in the traditional format, and the characters in the paintings show no signs of obsolescence, still maintaining a new artistic style. From these works, Mr. Feng Zikai's transformation and innovation of traditional art forms can be felt.

Especially in today's accelerating globalization process, heterogeneous cultures have had a strong impact on Chinese People's spiritual life. Especially for the younger generation represented by contemporary college students, their ideas and aesthetic concepts are more guided and dominated by foreign cultures, and local and ethnic cultures have become almost marginalized. Young people, who are responsible for their country's future, have also shown hesitation in dealing with the selection and inheritance of traditional culture. However, Feng Zikai's inclusive and innovative art philosophy of taking the past as the new can provide a good reference for the development of art education in the new era and the updating of art concepts. The new era art ideology should always adhere to the dominant position of excellent traditional culture in terms of content, defend the core spirit of national culture and actively help students establish their own cultural confidence in the process of cultivating students. At the same time, it is necessary to be guided by the times' needs. Various cultural elements are openly and rationally absorbed, while traditional culture is scientifically and reasonably innovated and transformed. Feng Zikai's art thoughts and practical experience in art education have practical significance for the development of contemporary art and traditional culture.

### **3.3 IMPROVING SERVICE LEVEL, PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST AND NOV-VULGAR WORK**

Feng Zikai believes that art should serve the people and be people-oriented. His comic and prose works are both based on the ordinary people's lives, reflecting social reality and people's voices. His artistic creations have a strong sense of the people, demonstrating the

close connection between art and the people. Feng Zikai believes that art should continuously improve its service level and provide better cultural services for the people. He focuses on the popularization and improvement of art education, cultivating the people's artistic and cultural literacy through art education. In addition, Feng Zikai believes that art should not only be able to stand out to the public, but also deeply ingrained in people's hearts. His comic and prose works both have a distinct personality and innovation, while also possessing broad social influence and cultural value. His artistic creation not only embodies superb artistic skills, but also can be understood and accepted by the people. His comic and prose works deeply reflect people's emotions and social reality. His works can accurately grasp the people's emotional pulse and express the content and form that the people enjoy. His works have the times' distinct characteristics and humanistic care, demonstrating the profound connection between art and the people.

Feng Zikai hopes to enhance the national art literacy through popular art education methods, which can help accelerate the construction of social spiritual civilization. He also proposed the concept of artistic equality. He believed that art is an equal existence for everyone, and everyone has the right to receive art education. Art is not a professional discipline, but a human nature. Without specialized art, everyone is a born expert. He not only created art works that are approachable, easy to understand, and can touch people with beauty and life, but also actively participated in mass art education activities through his own practical actions, bringing artistic inspiration and influence to the people.

He proposed that artists should go deep into the masses, have a clear understanding of the most ordinary people's appreciation and aesthetics, and explore the most ordinary and closest art. This still has certain reference significance in today's art creation. For example, people improve handicrafts in daily life to make them both practical and artistic. Musical instruments should be innovative, cheap and portable. The instruments should be easy to be learned, such as the harmonica. It should be popularized to bring instrumental art into the ordinary people's hands. Pure art should be added with a literary and artistic color that is easy to understand and popular among the public, making it in line with its aesthetic habits.

At the same time, Feng Zikai emphasized the importance of maintaining a moderate level of interest and style in his art of serving the people, striving to achieve excellence while maintaining a high melody. This enables art to have the functions of preaching, educating, improving life and inspiring the people, providing more reference for the innovation of today's art ideology. He also believed that both popular art and folk one should be simple, populist and healthy. They should not excessively pursue entertainment and pleasure, but instead move towards the poles of vulgarity and kitsch. This tells people in today's era that art, as the main battlefield leading the development of social culture and art, must adhere to principles and bottom lines in the work of art education in universities, so that the content



of art education can always be filled with a vibrant humanistic spirit and warm and touching human emotions. The artistic works, produced in this way, can achieve the goal of cultivating sentiment, inspiring spirit, beautifying life and better meet people's current aesthetic needs.

### 3.4 PROMOTING SOCIAL HARMONY

Feng Zikai believes that art education should focus on cultivating a healthy personality and a beautiful soul. Through art education, people can better understand, appreciate and create beauty, thereby promoting comprehensive human development and social harmony. He believes that the nature's beauty is the source of artistic beauty. He advocates pursuing the nature's beauty in artistic creation, advocating a simple and concise artistic style, thereby guiding people to return to nature, get close to it and achieve the goal of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. Feng Zikai's comic and prose works both focus on social reality, especially the ordinary people's living conditions. He expressed his profound reflection on social reality and concern for people's lives through art, thereby guiding people to pay attention to social issues and promoting social harmony. Feng Zikai emphasized the social responsibility of art, believing that art should take on social responsibility and play a positive role. He advocated that art should serve the people, promote mutual understanding and communication among them, and enhance social cohesion and centripetal force. He also advocated the popularization of art and believed that art should enter the ordinary people's homes. He is committed to promoting art education, improving the people's artistic and cultural literacy, enabling more people to appreciate and create beauty, thereby promoting the society's harmonious development.

Feng Zikai's art and prose ideas contain a concept of harmony. He hoped that relying on childlike innocence and fun could awaken sympathy among people in today's society, enabling harmonious development between people and nature, and building a harmonious society (Zhuo, 2019, p. 23). His comics are full of harmonious elements, such as warmth, kindness, compassion and care. His pursuit of love and beauty has a profound impact on today's socialist construction, on a moderately prosperous society's comprehensive construction and on the ecological sustainable development.

Feng Zikai's art thoughts are of great significance in cultivating an artistic mindset. In practical life, people should search for the nature's beauty and appreciate the precious wealth bestowed by nature with a pure childlike innocence. Faced with the society's interests, one should have a calm heart and not fall into the quagmire of interests, unable to extricate oneself. Under the influence of art ideology, valuing oneself and considering others reduce many disputes among people, reduce disharmonious factors in society and convey more positive energy to each other. At the same time, with the continuous improvement of people's aesthetic literacy, humans can also maintain their own love, cherish life, care for it and present

a harmonious scene in society when facing all things. People and the environment can also coexist harmoniously. People living in this land, in a poetic way, can better enjoy the emotions and beauty brought by life, which plays an important role in promoting social harmony.

In addition, Feng Zikai's artistic ideas have important practical significance for contemporary art education and a harmonious society's construction. Firstly, regarding art education, Feng Zikai emphasized that art education should not be limited to the scope of schools, but must go beyond campus and into society. This viewpoint still has a guiding role in modern society (Kell, 2007, p. 125). In today's society, where commercialization has permeated various aspects, some art educators attach more importance to the cultivation of technology, believing that students' mastery of technical knowledge is the most important. However, Feng Zikai repeatedly emphasized that the most important aspect of art education is human education, integrating art education into various disciplines. In the process of education and learning, it cultivates students' "artistic heart" and helps them cultivate a sound personality.

In the process of art education, children unleash their free artistic talent and preserve their childlike innocence, while adults learn how to love things through art education in a materialistic society, and learn to discover the life's beauty and love life with an artistic attitude.

This educational concept that emphasizes human nature and the discovery of the life's beauty can be applied to modern society, helping people better understand and appreciate the beautiful things in life, and improving their humanistic literacy. Secondly, Feng Zikai believes that, through art education, one can cultivate character and improve personality. This viewpoint is of great significance for building a harmonious society. A person with a sound personality is more likely to have the ability to tolerate and understand others, and to respect and accept different perspectives and cultures, thereby promoting social harmony and stability. Art education should not only focus on personal development, but also promote social harmony. Through art education, it can help people better understand others, enhance their cross-cultural communication abilities and further enhance social cohesion. Finally, Feng Zikai believes that art is the most courageous and moving thing in art. This viewpoint highlights the important position and role of art in social development. In today's society, people often place too much emphasis on material interests and technological progress, while neglecting the value and role of art. However, Feng Zikai's viewpoint reminds us that art is a human spiritual life's important component, providing people with spiritual satisfaction and comfort, and helping them better cope with the challenges and pressures in life. At the same time, art can also serve as a tool for communication and exchange, helping people better understand and accept different cultures and values.

Through the above research, we can see that Feng Zikai's art thought has social value in many aspects, but the most social value is that he advocates art to pay attention to reality, reflecting the reality of people's living conditions. He advocates "art biochemistry", that is, art is closely related to human life and is a reflection of the life's reality. Feng Zikai believed that art could not be confined to the realm of the school, but must go out of the schoolyard and into the society. At the same time, he emphasized that the most important thing in art education is the human beings' education, and art education should be infiltrated into all disciplines to cultivate students' "artistic heart" in the process of education and learning. His viewpoint is of great practical significance to the construction of a harmonious society in modern society. In terms of specific artistic creation, Feng Zikai advocated to take real life as the basis, and his cartoons, essays and music creations all show a strong life's flavor. For example, his cartoons "Sick Car", "High Counter", "Chaos Stretcher", "Flower Girl" and so on depict the ordinary people's daily life, reflecting the true face of social reality. This concept of his creation embodies the idea of "humanization of art". Therefore, Feng Zikai's artistic thinking has important social values in both artistic creation and social education.

Feng Zikai's art thought and his art education practice not only have unique value in specific historical periods, but also have important practical significance in cultivating a healthy personality and building a harmonious society in today's society (Harvey, 2017, p. 137). However, in the examination of Feng Zikai's art thought, it can also be seen that Feng Zikai's art thought also has its limitations. For example, the concept of overemphasizing the social role of art, believing that art can save the nation, shaping the truth, goodness and people's beauty, forming a complete personality and establishing a harmonious society of great harmony, all have a certain idealistic color that goes beyond social reality. In the era of fierce war, in order to achieve victory in the Chinese revolution and cultivate a complete personality, it is necessary to achieve a society's comprehensive transformation, which requires the elimination of private ownership and a certain economic and material foundation in order to achieve it. Compared with the other artists' art thoughts of the same era, Feng Zikai's art thoughts are more scattered and reflected in his artistic creation, with less systematic discussion. The limitations of his art thoughts are also understandable as they are unavoidable in specific historical contexts. Mr. Feng Zikai is dedicated to art education and public art practice. He is good at identifying some problems that arise in the implementation of art education and proposing targeted viewpoints. This has special theoretical value and contemporary significance for improving the connotation and development of art education, and is worthy of attention and learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

With the time's development, people's attention to the value of art thoughts is also increasing. This article studied Feng Zikai's art thoughts and contemporary values. Through research, it was found that, although Feng Zikai's aesthetic ideas did not form a systematic and mature theoretical framework, the humanistic spirit and practical care, contained in them, demonstrated his erudition, versatility, foresight and magnanimity. His tremendous success, in art education practice, can prove that his art ideas are scientific and useful. His concept of art education has provided a practical experience for the improvement and dissemination of his art ideas, ultimately achieving the unity of knowledge and action in art education.

The art ideology of the new era pursues the shaping of high-quality talents with independent spirit and perfect personality, and can play a leading and exemplary role in cultural and artistic aspects. Feng Zikai's artistic ideas have important contemporary value. His artistic and creative concepts have provided important inspiration and reference for modern art education, helping people better understand the essence and purpose of art education. At the same time, his artistic ideas have also promoted the development of social aesthetic education, improving the public's understanding and appreciation of aesthetics. His artistic works and cultural exchange activities have also made important contributions to the cultural exchange and artistic inheritance between China and Japan. In addition, Feng Zikai's art ideology has significance and value beyond time and space in strengthening and popularizing art education, improving the professionalism of art education and art teacher education, promoting cultural inheritance and innovation, improving social services and cultivating personality.

Under the new historical conditions, rediscovering the value and significance of Feng Zikai's art thought, reinterpreting Feng Zikai's art thought, can bring many benefits to people. Feng Zikai's artistic ideas not only provide theoretical inspiration for people, but also provide important guidance for people to approach society and promote social harmony. Therefore, we should conduct in-depth research and learn from Feng Zikai's artistic ideas to better inherit and develop traditional Chinese culture, and promote its internationalization. However, this study also have some shortcomings. Due to the limitations of research time and resources, we may not be able to comprehensively cover all aspects of Feng Zikai's art thoughts, resulting in a relatively limited research scope. In addition, the contemporary value of Feng Zikai's art thought is a relatively subjective concept, which is difficult to objectively evaluate.

The paper mainly analyzed and evaluated the contemporary value of Feng Zikai's art ideas based on the current social and cultural background, but this evaluation may be influenced by personal perspectives and cultural differences. In future research, efforts can be made to expand the scope of research by not only focusing on Feng Zikai's comic and prose

works, but also conducting in-depth research on his translated works. At the same time, further analysis of the core content of Feng Zikai's artistic ideas can be strengthened, such as conducting more detailed research on his artistic creation process, specific works and the formation of artistic concepts.

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